

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, California 95814

**HURRICANE KATRINA INFORMATION**

September 7, 2005

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO. I-51-05

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
 ALL CalWORKs PROGRAM SPECIALISTS
 ALL FOOD STAMP PROGRAM SPECIALISTS

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- State Law Change
 Federal Law or Regulation Change
 Court Order
 Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
 Initiated by CDSS

SUBJECT: HURRICANE KATRINA UPDATE

The purpose of this All County Information Notice (ACIN) is to update county welfare directors and staff on relief efforts underway to assist victims of Hurricane Katrina, and to provide guidance for connecting evacuees to services for food, medical, and relocation assistance. We understand that as of September 7, 2005, ***all plans to transfer Hurricane Katrina evacuees from Texas to other states are on hold until further information becomes available.*** Recent assessments have determined that many evacuees are not interested in transferring from their locations in Texas. Many evacuees prefer to remain in the region as they resolve issues concerning the status of property, employment, and the safety of loved ones. However, some evacuees have already entered California and, if necessary, future evacuees will reach California in one of two ways:

1. Formal Evacuation Efforts. The Office of Emergency Services (OES) and the American Red Cross (ARC) have coordinated a phased entry up to 1,000 evacuees into California, if necessary. As little as four, but as much as 48 hours notice will be given to OES of the first wave of evacuees to enter the State. To date, three entry points in California have been identified:
 - San Diego is prepared to accept 600 evacuees.
 - San Francisco is prepared to accept 300 evacuees.
 - San Jose is prepared to accept 100 evacuees.
2. Independent Evacuation Efforts. Churches, nonprofit organizations, and private individuals have launched a variety of efforts to evacuate individual New Orleans residents and/or families. These private evacuations began prior to the onset of the hurricane, and are continuing. Additionally, there are individuals and families who resided in the disaster areas, but were in California prior to the onset of the hurricane, and subsequently are unable to return home. Several counties have contacted the California Department of Social Services with news of individuals and families left homeless by the disaster and seeking assistance. In all these cases evacuation efforts have not been coordinated through OES and ARC.

Regardless of the method of evacuation, it is imperative that ALL persons identified as victims of Hurricane Katrina receive immediate referrals to the following:

1. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hotline (1-800-621-3362). Victims should be strongly encouraged to register with FEMA via telephone as quickly as possible to ensure their qualification for various forms of disaster relief. Registration with FEMA will serve as the starting point for referral to other agencies offering relief services. Failure to register prior to receiving other forms of relief may disqualify evacuees for immediate federal relief and relocation funding totaling thousands of dollars. *It is important that county workers who encounter evacuees ensure that registration is completed prior to ending any contact.*
2. Their local chapter of the ARC. Following this ACIN is a directory of local chapter phone numbers. The local ARC is the organization responsible for coordinating local relief efforts, and for tracking the status of evacuees.

Please be reminded that instructions regarding the processing of emergency applications for Food Stamps and CalWORKs on behalf of Katrina victims will be released as soon as possible.

All questions regarding the role of county welfare departments relative to relief efforts in response to Hurricane Katrina should be directed to me at (916) 657-2648. Thank you for your work on behalf of the victims of this tragedy.

Sincerely,

KEVIN GAINES
Deputy Director
Local Government and Community Relations

Attachment

c: CWDA
CSAC